



StrikeForce Initiative for Rural Growth and Opportunity

www.usda.gov/strikeforce

Arizona Fast Facts - 2014

State's Child Poverty Rate: 24.3%
State's Overall Poverty Rate: 18.9%
StrikeForce State Since: 2012
Number of StrikeForce Counties: 15
Total Outreach Events: 160
Number of Community Partners: 52
Total USDA Projects: 3,325
Total USDA Investments: \$481.5 million

Contacts

Contact us to be a partner, or to learn more about StrikeForce opportunities:

Jeff.Hays@az.usda.gov (928) 759-9301 ext. 103

Congressional Inquiries: (202) 720-7095

Media Inquiries: (202) 720-4623

Some of Our StrikeForce Community Partners

Arizona Cattle Growers Association Arizona Deptment of Agriculture

Arizona League of Cities & Towns

Arizona Public Service

Campesinos Sin Frontera

Cochise College

Native American Tribes

Navajo Nation Dept. of Agriculture

Navajo Nation Dept. of Natural Resources

Salt River Project

Southwest Indian Agricultural Association

University of Arizona Cooperative

Extension

ARIZONA

Currently, 85 percent of our country's persistent poverty counties are in rural America. More than one third of rural Americans, and one in four rural children live in poverty. Kids growing up in families earning twice the poverty threshold are nearly three times as likely as other children to have poor health, are more likely to finish two fewer years of school, and are more likely to earn half as much money in their adult lives.

Growing the economy by investing in rural communities and increasing opportunities for families is key to our Nation's future. In 2010, Secretary Vilsack established USDA's StrikeForce Initiative for Rural Growth and Opportunity to address the specific challenges associated with rural poverty. Since then, StrikeForce teams have collaborated with more than 500 community partners and public entities to bring targeted assistance to rural areas experiencing chronic poverty.

These efforts have invested more than \$16.5 billion to create jobs, build homes, feed kids, assist farmers and conserve natural resources across twenty states. In 2015, StrikeForce expanded to include Oklahoma and Puerto Rico. Now, USDA StrikeForce teams will operate in 880 counties in 21 states and Puerto Rico. Each StrikeForce project is a commitment to America's economic future.

StrikeForce At Work

Arizona's StrikeForce efforts concentrate on improving access to healthy, affordable foods in a state with chronic rural poverty, high unemployment, and low food security. One of the biggest challenges is ensuring that communities in need get access to critical services and support. As part of StrikeForce, USDA is partnering with local and regional food activists and organizations to increase awareness of the benefits of and assistance for local and regional food systems. This year, USDA has coordinated and participated in 160 outreach events across the state.

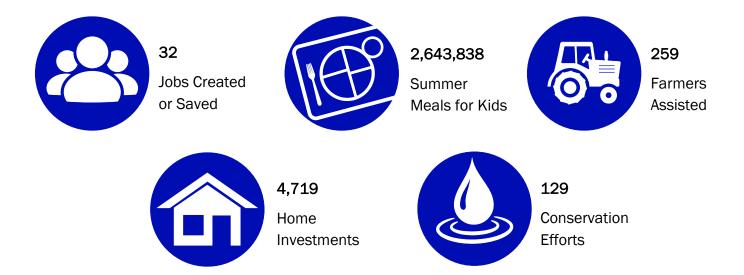
One USDA forum focusing on increasing healthy food access drew a wide spectrum of participants, including farmers markets, farmers, food banks, food assistance organizations, schools, communities and master gardeners. USDA Rural Development, USDA Natural Resource and Conservation Service, USDA Farm Service Agency, and USDA Food and Nutrition Service were joined by state agencies and Cooperative Extension. Forum participants discussed various strategies for increasing healthy food access across the state.

As a result, Rural Development is considering several community projects supporting farm diversification, facility repairs, distribution equipment, and commodity storage to strengthen the local food system and increase healthy food access for Arizonians in need.

StrikeForce Initiative for Rural Growth and Opportunity in Arizona

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3,325 Projects Invested = \$481.5 Million Invested



USDA UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

